



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the
Interior

San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park

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San Antonio Missions National Historical Park News Release

June 18, 2008

For Immediate Release

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Ribbon Cutting Ceremony and Archaeology Open House Tuesday, June 24, 2008 at Rancho de las Cabras, Floresville, Texas

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park invites the public for a ribbon cutting ceremony for the opening of the new park road to Rancho de las Cabras near Floresville, Texas. The public is also invited to an archaeology open house at Rancho de las Cabras. Join National Park Service and University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research archaeologists to tour and discuss archaeological excavations of Rancho de las Cabras. Ribbon cutting ceremony begins at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, June 24; the archaeology open house is from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM.


Established as early as 1762, Rancho de las Cabras is the ranch for Mission San Francisco de la Espada. Mission ranches like Rancho de las Cabras, served vital roles in the long term economic survival of Spanish colonial missions. With as many as 1,200 head of cattle and as many as 4,000 sheep and goats, mission livestock provided food for the mission and served as a valuable economic resource for trade. Visible today at Rancho de las Cabras are the remains of a small church and a few rooms all contained within a walled compound that once had walls spanning up to fifteen feet in height.

The National Park Service received funds to construct a new entrance road to Rancho de las Cabras. Located approximately twenty-five miles southeast of San Antonio near Floresville, Texas, the road is an infrastructure investment to the continued development of the Rancho for improved visitor access and understanding. Previously, access to this unit of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park was limited to an unimproved two track path subject to washouts and bogs. The two-track is now an engineered gravel road with several culverts installed to eliminate washouts, greatly improving visitor access and safety. "The work the NPS is doing to bring to life the Rancho de las Cabras highlights our Spanish colonial roots and is central to our efforts to make the Floresville area a tourist destination," says Jesse M. Perez, Executive Director of the Floresville Economic Development Corporation. "We appreciate all the efforts of so many people to make this happen."

Also occurring is a day long archaeology open house. The National Park Service is partnering with the University of Texas at San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research to conduct long term archeological investigations at Rancho de las Cabras. This year UTSA-CAR is conducting

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an archeological field school to excavate portions of the Rancho de las Cabras compound. “We are hoping to better define the west wall of the compound and further understand the occupation episodes of the Rancho,” says UTSA-CAR lead archeologist Marybeth Tomka. National Park Service Park Archaeologist Susan Snow states that the long term goals of the UTSA-CAR and NPS partnership is to identify activity areas and features at the site to “aid in understanding and interpreting Spanish colonial ranching and determine the best methods for long term preservation of the site.”

Access Rancho de las Cabras from San Antonio by taking US 181 south to Floresville. Turn west-southwest on State Highway 97 travel approximately 3.5 miles to County Road CR144 (right across from Promise Land Dairy). Turn south onto County Road CR144 and travel approximately 1.6 miles to Rancho entrance.

The NPS and UTSA-CAR also announce a series of public dig days at Rancho de las Cabras. Join NPS and UTSA-CAR archaeologists in uncovering the past using up-to-date archaeological excavation techniques while learning more about Spanish colonial ranching history. Public dig days are scheduled for September 6, September 27, October 11, and November 1 beginning at 9:00 AM lasting until 2:00 PM each day.

For more information on this event or about San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and other programs presented, please call (210) 534-8833.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park is celebrating its 30th anniversary as a National Park. Established in 1978 to protect, restore, and interpret the Spanish colonial missions of San Antonio, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park preserves the largest concentration of cultural resources from the Spanish colonial period in the United States. For more information about the National Park Service and San Antonio Missions National Historical Park please visit our web site at www.nps.gov/saan. For more information about our friends group, Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, visit www.loscompadres.org.

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